

Message Text

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DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR HUME, FAS

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TAGS: EPAP

SUBJECT: CITRUS/FUNGICIDES

1. VIRTUALLY ALL TOKYO PAPERS CARRIED STORY RE SUBMITTAL OF OPP MUTAGENICITY DATA TO FOOD SANITATION INVESTIGATION COUNCIL (FSIC). MHW MINISTER WATANABE ALSO QUESTIONED SHARPLY AT DIET SESSION TODAY AS TO WHETHER THIS NOT GOJ POLITICAL CONCESSION TO US FOR UPCOMING SUMMIT MEETING, WHICH HE STRONGLY DENIED. BELOW IS ARTICLE WHICH APPERED IN 3/15 ENGLISH VERSION OF ASAHI EVENING NEWS CAPTIONED "OKAY SEEN FOR IMPORT OF OPP-COATED CITRUS FRUITS", "AIM IS TO IMPROVE DUKUDA-CARTER TALKS?"

"JAPAN IS LOSING ITS "LEMON WAR" WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE TRADE DISPUTE OVER CITRUS FRUITS COATED WITH ORTHOPHENYLPHENOL (OPP), A FUNGICIDE, HAS BEEN GOING ON SINCE THE SPRING OF 1975.

THE HEALTH AND ELFARE MINISTRY TUESDAY ASKED THE FOOD SANITATION COUNCIL, AN ADVISORY BODY, TO STUDY THE SAFETY OF OPP. THE REQUEST WAS ACCOMPANIED BY RESEARCH DATA SUPPORTING A CONCLUSION THAT THE FUNGICIDE DOES NOT HAVE HEREDITARY TOXITY.

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IN THE ABSENCE OF CONVINCING DATA TO THE CONTRARY, THE COUNCIL IS CERTAIN TO TELL THE MINISTRY THAT OPP IS SAFE TO USE. THE MINISTRY IS EXPECTED TO APPROVE THE IMPORT OF OPP-COATED CITRUS FRUITS WITHIN NEXT MONTH AT THE EARLIET. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THE HEALTH AND WELFARE MOVE ON OPP, COMING BEFORE PRIME MINISTER TAKEO FUKUDA'S DEPARTURE

SATURDAY FOR WASHINGTON, IS DESIGNED TO BETTER THE ATOMOSPHERE OF HIS SUMMIT TALKS WITH PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, THE MINISTRY HAS NOT BEEN AUTHORIZING NEW FOOD ADDITIVES SINCE 1971, AND THE EXPECTED APPROVAL OF THE USE OF OPP WILL RUN COUNTER TO THE PRINCIPLE.

JAPANESE IMPORTERS WERE ORDERED BY THE MINISTRY IN THE SPRING OF 1975 TO RECOVER US LEMONS FROM THE MARKET AND STOP THEIR SHIPMENTS AFTER THEY WERE FOUND TO BE COATED WITH THE FUNGICIDE. FOLLOWING THE BAN, LEMON PRICES SOARED TO 500 YEN A PIECE.

PRESSURES ON JAPAN

THE UNITED STATES HAS SINCE BEEN PRESSING FOR THE LIFTING OF THE OPP BAN IN ALL POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS HELD WITH JAPAN. THE LATEST REQUEST WAS MADE BY VICE PRESIDENT WALTER MONDALE WHEN HE MET FUKUDA HERE IN JANUARY. JAPAN IMPORTED 64,000 TONS OF LEMONS, 22,100 TONS OF ORANGES, AND 146,700 TONS OF GRAPES IN 1975. NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF THE LEMONS CAME FROM AMERICA, WHILE THAT COUNTRY ACCOUNTED FOR 90 PERCENT OF THE ORANGE AND GRAPEFRUIT IMPORTS.

THE USE OF OPP TO THE TUNE OF 10-20 PPM (PARTS PER MILLION) IS AUTHORIZED IN MANY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EC) STATES, AND AUSTRALIA. IN PRESSING FOR AN END OF THE JAPANESE PROHIBITION, AMERICA HAS POINTED OUT THAT THE JOINT FOOD STANDARD COMMISSION OF

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THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) AND THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) FOUND THAT OPP WAS HARMLESS UP TO ONE MILLIGRAM PER ONE KILOGRAM OF BODY WEIGHT A DAY. THE JAPANESE REJECTION OF THE DEMAND HAS BEEN BASED ON A CONTENTION THAT THE WHO-FAO EXPERIMENTS CONCERNED ONLY ACUTE TOXICITY AND CHRONIC TOXICITY AND NO DATA WERE AVAILABLE ON HEREDITARY TOXICITY.

THE RESEARCH DATA SUBMITTED TO THE FOOD SANITATION COUNCIL TUESDAY HAD BEEN SUPPLIED BY A PRIVATE RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON RESIDUAL FARM CHEMICALS, WHICH HAD CONDUCTED RELEVANT EXPERIMENTS LAST YEAR AT THE REQUEST OF AN ASSOCIATION OF JAPANESE FRUIT IMPORTERS.

A JOINT PROTEST WAS LODGED BY THREE CONSUMER ORGANIZATIONS MONDAY WITH THE HEALTH AND WELFARE MINISTRY."

2. ARTICLE ALSO APPEARED IN NIHON KEIZAI WITH ESSENTIALLY SAME INFO. BUT ALSO INCLUDED QUOTATION BY MHW ENVIRON-

MENTAL SANITATION BUREAU D.G. J. MATSUURA AS FOLLOWS:
"FEWER KINDS OF FOOD ADDITIVES WILL BE DESIRABLE, BUT WE
HAVE NOT TAKEN THE VIEW THAT WE WILL NOT ADD A SINGLE
MATERIAL WHICH IS CONVENIENT AND USEFUL FOR OUR LIVELI-
HOOD. IF USE THEREOF IS TO LEAD US TO LIVE IN PLENTY. WE
HAVE NO OBJECTION TO GIVING APPROVAL."
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